

## GETTING IT RIGHT...AGAIN!

Yom Kippur 5768  
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For those who are with us for the first time tonight, a hearty Shana Tova and a welcome to our public gathering. May your fast be easy tonight and tomorrow. We don't have many of these gatherings a year, so each one is very special to our staff and to many of our constituency. Each time we gather we take a section or sections of the Bible and see if this Book has anything to say to us, as 21<sup>st</sup> century people.

Last week we began to consider again this New Year, 5768 and the desire of God to be in relationship with us. That in itself is an awesome point to consider.

Now tonight, we will look at the idea of getting it right...again. Some may grow weary of New Year talks. I never do. For many reasons the Holidays were always a time of good feelings for me. Maybe it was because I enjoyed getting new clothing and attending the synagogue with my parents. I enjoyed starting school again at this time of year, after a long season as we have in the US, of 3 months off from official learning. The weather often began to change at this time, with the leaves turning colours and a crispness in the air in the early morning or evening. The world was going to be different for me, so maybe it would be different for everyone. And I wanted to get it right.

If there was ever a theme in my upbringing it was 'get it right.' The words may not have been put in that phrase. The idea of the Jewish understanding of 'tikkun olam' was the backdrop, but I never heard that phrase. God wanted his people the Jewish people, to make the world better. He wanted us to 'repair the world' as the phrase translates. And although it wasn't until I was a teenager when I officially learned and appropriated that phrase, the more secular 'getting it right' seemed to be a watchword for me and for my family and perhaps for a whole generation.

Let me read to you from the Bible for a moment, and then I'll come back to this theme.

"Now when John in prison heard of the works of Christ, he sent word by his disciples, and said to Him, "Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?" And Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you hear and see: the blind receive sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. "And blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me." (Matthew 11.2-6)

Once again we start over, as 5768 is in full swing. Last week Jewish people listened to the sounds of the shofar, blown 100 times each day, to remind us of the sovereignty of the Kingship of the Lord God. The shofar reminds us to repent, to get it right with God, and with one another.

But maybe you are weary of the same old same old. Maybe this idea of annual holidays is wearying. Maybe it's the idea of fasting, which can be wearying. True story: The other night, I caught a bit of the TV show *Entourage*,

and the setting of this particular episode was Yom Kippur. The Jewish star of the show, Jeremy Pivin and his wife were having quite a row over the holiness of the day, and she was upset that he was conducting his Hollywood business on that sacred day. One of his business associates was equally troubled by his family similarly upset. As if it were really such a hardship, the associate cried out "I've been fasting for 10 hours already, what do you want from me?"

Weariness can set in and some stop fasting and others give the public gatherings a miss. You, however, are not among those.

But even though you are present with us tonight, perhaps you are weary.

## **DOUBT PREVENTS OUR GETTING IT RIGHT...OR DOES IT?**

The number one wearying factor is doubt.

Isaac Bashevis Singer said,

"Doubt is part of all religion. All the religious thinkers were doubters."  
-New York Times, December 3, 1978

Alfred Korzybski, the great semanticist and scientist, wrote,

"There are two ways to slide easily through life: to believe everything or to doubt everything; both ways save us from thinking."

One of my favourite thinkers is Blaise Pascal who said,

"We must learn our limits. We are all something, but none of us are everything."

So in the Bible section we read, we see a famous Bible character coming to grips with his doubts. That in itself might encourage some of you. Did you know Bible heroes doubted at times?

So when I say, we're going to get it right, tonight on Yom Kippur, what is your response?

Doubt...getting it right, can I really do this again? What if this isn't right? What if I'm totally wrong on this faith stuff?

## **JOHN THE DOUBTER**

Perhaps the story I read of the famous John the Baptist might help you.

John was in prison after working for years in preaching repentance to our Jewish people. He was the last great prophet, and introduced Y'shua, Jesus to the world a few chapters, and maybe a couple years earlier.

Now he's in prison for his faith, as so many great heroes of the Bible and beyond have been. Men like Joseph and Daniel, people like Corrie Ten Boom and her sister and Richard Wurmbrand and Brother Wu, all imprisoned for their faith.

While in prison John begins to rethink his commitments. He wonders aloud if he's made the right choice. Sure, it was exciting in the beginning. Yes, God was real and then John actually saw a dove land on the head of his first cousin.

But now there has been testing. Now there has been persecution. Now the king threatened him. And John is rethinking his commitments.

And so would you.

Or at least I would.

But look at what John did with his doubts. Maybe it's better to say, let's see what he did NOT do with his doubts. John did not send a message to Richard Dawkins, to be reminded of his laughable faith. John did not send an email to John Shelby Spong, that he would be ridiculed for such silly simplicity.

No, in fact, John sent a message to Y'shua.

**John went to a man of faith in times of crisis and in times of doubt.**

And what was the reply? What would Y'shua say to someone who had doubts? Like so many encouragers in these days, perhaps he would say, "Hang in there, John, it's been tough before, but you'll make it." Or maybe he would say in the way of identification, "Yes, John, I've been where you are many times, and God helped me, so I'm sure he'll help you."

Or maybe Y'shua would upbraid John by saying, "John, you announced me to the world, and now you doubt? Ha. What kind of disciple are you anyway?" Or finally Jesus might have simply said, "Trust me John" and sounded like a used car salesman. [With apologies to those of you who do sell used cars for a living.]

These are all valid possibilities, and certainly validated more by the haunting sounds of my own echoes of wrong responses over the years.

No, Y'shua said, "Go and report to John what you hear and see." Y'shua is telling the friends of John to take back a bundle of CSI evidence. He's saying that the proof is in the pudding and the pudding is real. Don't believe because it's simpler that way. Don't believe because you were raised that way. Don't believe as some say, without evidence. Jesus is saying the evidence is in and it's weighty.

In fact, the quote is from Isaiah, the Older Testament prophet. In chapter 35 we read "Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. Then the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb will shout for joy. For waters will break forth in the wilderness and streams in the Arabah." (Isa 35.5-6)

Jesus is saying, John, believe the signs. The evidence is in, and I'm the Messiah, for when Messiah comes, healings will take place and blind will see, and deaf will hear and lame will walk. And John, you've seen and heard that. So trust me because I'm to be trusted!

John did the right thing with his doubt. He went to the man and the source of all faith.

When you have doubt, you should do no less.

## **MESSIAH OUR ATONEMENT**

On Yom Kippur, this Day of Atonement, we see a portrait of the perfect atonement that we have in the death and resurrection of the Messiah Jesus. For just as the ancient high priest had to re-emerge alive from the Holy of

Holies on this day, as a signal that his sacrifice on our behalf had been sufficient and acceptable to God, so Jesus, our eternal High Priest and perfect Lamb of God, had to re-emerge alive from the grave as proof that what He'd said was true: "It is finished."

Doubts are quelled and faith is the strengthener.

It's not some blind faith; it's resultant faith. It's caused faith. Faith that came from taking God at his word. What he said he would perform, he did perform. What he accomplished, we can see and hear. And as a result, we can believe him about some propositional truths and about our very life!

The rabbis to this day believe that if all Israel were to celebrate Shabbat at least once, Messiah would come. Combine that with the holiness of this special day, Yom Kippur, also titled "Sabbath of Sabbaths" and you have a double gamble. It's as if we are doubling down and calling God's bet. If we can get everyone to observe the day, Messiah will come.

But the rabbis don't even agree with one another about what is 'observing the Sabbath.' How can we all possibly do what they want, when they don't know what they want? If our Messiah's coming was contingent on our good works, well we and he would certainly fail.

Friends here in Bondi Junction tonight, I believe Messiah has come. I believe the holiness of this night is unmatched anywhere. He alone is our redeemer. He alone is our Saviour. Jesus alone is our Messiah. And he came to ransom the world from sin and from self-consumption and from selfishness. He's our only hope, amen?

#### **ATONEMENTS IN OUR LIVES**

Yom Kippur is the Day of Atonement. Actually in the biblical book of Leviticus, the day is named "the day of 'atonements.'" Plural. We say the same in the Kol Nidre. From this Yom Kippur to the next. Interesting. Why plural? Perhaps because it means that many parts of our lives need fixing, not just our life, but our lives. In light of that, what areas might need atoning? What parts of our lives do we need to get right...again?

Let's consider our economic life. God wants to be Lord of our money, our wallet, our giving, and our charity *en toto*. He cares if we care for others. He gave so we can give to make the world a better place. And when you think about your life of money, you may need to repent of using your money wrongly. Let's get it right. That's why we said what we did in the Al Khet.

How about our social life? God wants to be Lord of our relationships, of our families, of our daily linkages with others. Do you have someone you need to get right with? Do you relate to others in the way you want them to relate to you? You get the idea.

The same can be accomplished in your dietary life or in your political life or in your devotional life. Get it? Get it right... today for the rest of your life. The way to get it right is to admit you got it wrong, ask God in Y'shua's name to forgive you, and live in the rightness he brings.

This day, Yom Kippur, is the day of making things right. How about it...for you... will you do that this Friday night/ Saturday? Will you get it right with God and with each other? Will your lives be atoned? Will you be able to smile on Saturday night having completed your repair work?

The Bible says, "So Messiah Jesus was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."-- Heb 9.28

And again we read this in the history of the early Jewish believers, in Acts 3.19

"Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord"

Getting it right is about acknowledging how badly we got it wrong. And then not being content about wrong. Don't say, "to err is human" and excuse yourself. Don't say, "we all do it." Not settling for 2<sup>nd</sup> best. Let's get with the program. Let's get it right, now, tonight and from now on.

The way to get it right is simple, but hard. Simple because it's not about you. Hard because it's not about you. It's about Y'shua and his dying for our sins and receiving in himself all of God's justice. He died suffering our shame and rose from the dead to give us eternal life.

And what is my role? To believe in him and trust him with your life. Not only one segment of it, but the lot. That's simple and that's hard. I understand.

Lisa had to do that in the DVD we watched.

Most of us in the sanctuary had to do that one day in our past.

Tonight is your night if you've never said 'Yes' to Y'shua before. Do it tonight. Get it right and then next week, get it right...again.

## INVITATION

So... let me ask you. Have you met the Lord of the Yom Kippur? Have you ever been born again? Do you have rest for your soul? If not, pray this prayer and receive His love and grace. Father, forgive me in the name of Y'shua for all my sins. He was the Saviour and the fulfilment of all prophecies about Messiah. He is the one and the only one who can save me from my selfishness, from my sin. I acknowledge Y'shua as that one who wants to free me, and who alone can free me. I repent of my sin and accept Y'shua as my deliverer. By faith I am now born again by the Holy Spirit. Amen."

If you prayed that prayer, please talk to me after the service is over, so we can talk about growing in this knowledge and this relationship with God. Email me, won't you if you are reading this online?